

both majority and minority leadership. During the early 2000s, Dennis spent four years as Majority Leader and the last 16 years as Minority Leader.

Throughout his tenure, Dennis vowed to keep the Niagara County Legislature transparent and honest. When he first ran for office, he promised that he would never vote for a property tax increase. Thirty years later, Dennis has kept this promise.

Dennis sponsored several resolutions during his time on the Niagara County Legislature. Most notable was a resolution, that passed, allowing Niagara County residents to speak before the Legislature; previous policy did not allow residents to have a voice. He also sponsored a resolution that put in place an Animal Abuse Registry that requires registration for anyone convicted of animal cruelty. The registry now serves as a model for the rest of New York State. Additionally, Dennis sponsored resolutions to reserve parking spaces for Purple Heart recipients.

Of his many accomplishments, Dennis is most proud of his speech before Congress in the late 1970s. At the time, he was the president of United States Steel Workers of America Local 12256. Dennis's testimony led to immediate action by President Jimmy Carter ordering NIOSH and OSHA to help the 500 employees at the Hyde Park/Bloody Run Landfill in Niagara Falls who were suffering from cancer and blood-related diseases due to chemical exposure. The workers were able to obtain necessary medical testing and landfill was subsequently closed.

While serving as County Legislator, Dennis also worked full-time as a Niagara Falls building inspector, eventually becoming the city's director of inspections. His true passion though, is working for the people of Niagara County.

Dennis is the son of Carmella and the late Armand Virtuoso, a two-time Purple Heart recipient and World War II veteran. He and his wife, Gina Virtuoso, have two sons and a daughter. Dennis is a Navy Seal, Vincent works at the Niagara Falls Water Plant, and Gina is a nurse.

Dennis is passionate work over the past 30 years gave the people of Niagara County a voice in government. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to recognize Legislator Dennis Virtuoso's well-deserved retirement from the Niagara County Legislature. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Dennis for his leadership and service.

IN RECOGNITION OF OCTAVIO
"CHATO" VILLALOBOS

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 10, 2021

Mr. CLEAVER. Madam Speaker, it is with a deep sense of gratitude and admiration that I rise today to celebrate Kansas City Police Officer Octavio "Chato" Villalobos. The son of Mexican immigrants, Chato has made it his life's mission to serve and protect the people of Kansas City, Missouri while working tirelessly to ensure that communities of color are treated fairly and justly by our country's criminal justice system. In light of the protests that swept across our nation last summer, it is per-

haps more important than ever before to recognize police officers like Chato, whose selfless service is rooted in love and compassion for the people he protects.

Born in Torrance, California and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Chato takes great pride in belonging to Kansas City's thriving Mexican-American community. Known by others for his thoughtful nature, Chato has always understood that identifying as a Mexican-American police officer comes not only with immense pride, but with a profound sense of purpose and responsibility as well. Communities of color, including the Latino community, have faced racism, prejudice, and discrimination here in the United States for generations, and the injustices to which the Chicano community has been subjected are far too many to count. Chato knows this history well, but rather than letting it discourage him or dampen his spirits, he has used it as a constant source of motivation to make Kansas City a better place to call home, regardless of one's skin color or national origin.

Treating others the way he wishes to be treated, Chato has made significant strides towards building trust between Kansas City's police department and the Latino community it serves. Having worn the blue uniform for many years now, Chato understands that simply offering dignity and respect to the faces he meets while on patrol goes a long way toward creating a safer city where all people are treated fairly under the law. While negative stories capture headlines and screen time, Chato has lent a helping hand to the people of Kansas City any time the opportunity has arisen ever since the first time he donned the badge, and his compassionate nature has made him beloved throughout the city.

Beyond his work as a police officer, Chato has served as a mentor to boys on the path to manhood, instilling values into our young people that will ensure their success down the road. Chato has advocated passionately on behalf of DACA, and regularly volunteers with organizations aimed at uplifting the Latino community. A committed father, Chato makes sure to teach his children about their Mexican heritage by taking them to local Chicano and Latino art festivals and celebrations, believing firmly that appreciating one's genealogy helps build a sense of personal identity while giving us the strength to face the challenges of life. And in May of 2016, Chato's heartfelt poem "Brown Eyes in Blues" was read aloud to an audience in Kansas City by Juan Felipe Herrera, our nation's first Latino Poet Laureate.

Madam Speaker, the impact that Octavio "Chato" Villalobos has made on the Kansas City community is greater than any speech of mine can encapsulate. As we enter Hispanic Heritage Month, let us take time to recognize public servants like Chato who work every day to make sure the United States is living up to its founding principles of liberty and justice for all.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF THE
13 U.S. TROOPS WHO GAVE THEIR
LIVES HELPING OTHERS TO
FREEDOM

HON. DARRELL ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 10, 2021

Mr. ISSA. Madam Speaker, on Thursday, August 26, 2021, as the U.S. military was working to airlift thousands out of Afghanistan amid chaos at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, terrorists murdered more than 180 people including 13 members of the U.S. military there to assist American citizens seeking to come home.

Ten of those 13 U.S. troops were from a single unit at Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, just outside my district. Nine of them were Marines, part of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment. The tenth was a Navy corpsman attached to that unit. Their stories are now part of the long and valiant history of Camp Pendleton and the 2/1 battalion, known as "The Professionals."

The battalion saw combat at Guadalcanal and Okinawa in World War II and fought in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq as well. It helped run a temporary shelter at Camp Pendleton for thousands of Vietnamese refugees following the fall of Saigon in 1975.

In the days since the devastating news of last week's terrorist attack, the local community has embraced the families whose loved ones paid the ultimate price, creating a memorial of flowers and American flags outside Camp Pendleton's main gate in Oceanside.

Five of the marines were only 20 years old, and all but one were under 25. Four were from California.

They died doing an honorable job in an honorable way. As the official Pentagon announcement described it, they were "supporting non-combatant evacuation operations." In other words, they were helping innocent civilians make it home safely.

In devotion to their country, they were willing to risk their own homecoming to secure a safe homecoming for others. That's selfless service. That's a meaningful life. Their families can be proud of how they lived their brief lives.

While words seem powerless to ease the grief of loved ones suffering such a profound loss, I pray that their families can find some small comfort that a grateful nation honors the service and mourns the loss of these American heroes:

Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Darin T. Hoover: 31, of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Marine Corps Sgt. Johanny Rosario Pichardo: 25, of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole L. Gee: 23, of Sacramento, California.

Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Lopez: 22, of Indio, California.

Marine Corps Cpl. Daegan W. Page: 23, of Omaha, Nebraska.

Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto A. Sanchez: 22, of Logansport, Indiana.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. David L. Espinoza: 20, of Rio Bravo, Texas.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jared M. Schmitz: 20, of St. Charles, Missouri.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Rylee J. Mccollum: 20, of Jackson, Wyoming.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola: 20, of Rancho Cucamonga, California.

Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kareem M. Nikoui: 20, of Norco, California.

Navy Hospitalman Maxton W. Soviak: 22, of Berlin Heights, Ohio.

Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Knauss: 23, of Corryton, Tennessee.

More than just names on a list, they were each an individual hero who will be missed. The following is some of what has been reported about each of them and their loved ones, according to CBS News:

NAVY CORPSMAN MAXTON "MAX" W. SOVIAK, 22, OF BERLIN HEIGHTS, OHIO

Corpsman Maxton "Max" W. Soviak played football at Edison High School before graduating in 2017.

"As a football player he was full tilt 100 miles an hour, fearless, which leads you to understand, you know, where he was and what maybe happened," Jim Hall, head football coach at Edison, told CBS Cleveland, Ohio, affiliate WOIO-TV.

"It didn't seem real," Hall said. "It still really doesn't, you know, great kid, loved life. He was bright, bright kid, and it doesn't seem right. It doesn't seem fair, you know. I just hope the best for his family."

Soviak joined the Navy after high school graduation.

"He just loved life," Edison High School superintendent Thomas Roth told WOIO-TV. "He was out there and enjoyed things, and he was helpful for others as I think we all can see from what happened yesterday. You know, he was always there to help other people. He wanted to be of service and that's what he did."

ARMY STAFF SERGEANT RYAN C. KNAUSS, 23, OF CORRYTON, TENNESSEE

Sergeant Ryan C. Knauss went to Gibbs High School before he enrolled in the Army, his family told CBS Knoxville, Tennessee, affiliate WVLT-TV. Knauss was a member of the Army's 82nd Airborne division and a staff sergeant.

Knauss had only been in Afghanistan for a week before his death but had previously spent nine months in the country, his grandmother told WVLT.

No local funeral arrangements have been made at this time, family members said. Knauss will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

MARINE CORPS STAFF SERGEANT DARIN T. HOOVER JR., 31, OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Sergeant Darin Hoover Jr. was on his third tour of duty, his father Darin Hoover Sr. told Salt Lake City CBS affiliate KUTV.

"He led his men, and they followed him, but I know in my heart of hearts he was out front," Hoover Sr. said. "They [his fellow Marines] would follow him through the gates of hell if that's what it took."

He said the 9/11 terrorist attacks moved his son, who was a child at the time, to vow he'd serve in the military. "He decided, 'That's what I want to do,'" Hoover Sr. told KUTV.

Hoover Jr., 31, was based at Camp Pendleton in California.

"(He was the) best kid in the world," his father said. "Couldn't ask for any better."

MARINE CORPS SERGEANT JOHANNY ROSARIO PICHARDO, 25, OF LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

Sergeant Johnny Rosario Pichardo was screening women and children at the Abbey gate when the attack took place, according to

Marine First Lieutenant John "Jack" Coppola. He told CBS News in an email that Pichardo, a supply chief from the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, was a member of the brigade's Female Engagement Team (FET). FETs, he said, are "volunteer teams of female Marines with the experience and maturity necessary to enable continuity of operations while respecting cultural norms."

Coppola said Pichardo's service "was not only crucial to evacuating thousands of women and children, but epitomizes what it means to be a Marine: putting herself in danger for the protection of American values so that others might enjoy them."

Pichardo is a Lawrence High School graduate and former Bridgewater State University student. She is survived by her mother and sister, CBS Boston reports, and will be laid to rest in Lawrence, where her family lives.

"It was her family's wish that Rosario is remembered and honored as a hero," Lawrence Mayor Kendrys Vasquez said Saturday. Bridgewater State University also released a statement saying the "community is struck with profound grief upon learning of the death of one of our own" even though Rosario only attended for a semester before committing herself to the Marines.

MARINE CORPS SERGEANT NICOLE L. GEE, 23, OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

Marine Corps Sergeant Nicole L. Gee was one of several Marines seen cradling and comforting Afghan children amid evacuations just days before her death. On August 21, Gee posted a photo of herself holding an Afghan child on Instagram. "I love my job," the 23-year-old Sacramento native wrote.

Gee was sworn into the Marines less than a year ago and was promoted to sergeant three weeks before the Kabul attack, according to posts on her Instagram account.

Gee was married to a fellow Marine, Jarod Gee, her sister Misty Fuoco said. Nicole posted several Instagram photos of her and her husband celebrating the holidays and celebrating his own promotion to sergeant just a few months ago.

MARINE CORPS CORPORAL HUNTER LOPEZ, 22, OF INDIO, CALIFORNIA

Corporal Hunter Lopez joined the Marine Corps in 2017 and was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines, according to a statement released by the Riverside Sheriff's Department.

Lopez, 22, was the son of Riverside Deputy Sheriff Alicia Lopez and Riverside Sheriff's Captain Herman Lopez. He intended to follow his parents into law enforcement after his current deployment and become a Riverside County sheriff's deputy, the department's statement said.

MARINE CORPS CORPORAL DAEGAN W. PAGE, 23, OF OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Corporal Daegan Page joined the Marine Corps after he graduated from Millard South High School, according to a statement his family released to local news outlets.

He grew up in Red Oak, Iowa, and the metro Omaha area and was a member of the Boy Scouts. He enjoyed playing hockey and hunting and "spending time outdoors with his dad," the statement said. He loved the Chicago Blackhawks.

Page "always looked forward to coming home and hanging out with his family and many buddies in Nebraska." Once he finished his service in the Marines, he planned to at-

tend a local trade school and perhaps become an electrical lineman, the statement said.

MARINE CORPS CORPORAL HUMBERTO A. SANCHEZ, 22, OF LOGANSPORT, INDIANA

Corporal Humberto Sanchez was a 2017 graduate of Logansport High School who played varsity soccer and was on the homecoming court in his senior year, according to the IndyStar.

The school's principal, Matt Jones, told the IndyStar that Sanchez was one of five students in his class who enlisted in the Marines. He remembered Sanchez as "a bright, athletic young man who was popular, well-liked by his soccer teammates, classmates, coaches, and teachers."

Logansport Mayor Chris Martin mourned Sanchez's death in a Facebook post Friday.

"This young man had not yet even turned 30 and still had his entire life ahead of him," Martin wrote. "Any plans he may have had for his post-military life were given in sacrifice due to the heart he exhibited in putting himself into harm's way to safeguard the lives of others."

Indiana Congressman JIM BAIRD posted his condolences on Facebook, too, saying, "He bravely answered the call to serve his nation, and I am both proud of his service and deeply saddened by his loss."

MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL DAVID L. ESPINOZA, 20, OF RIO BRAVO, TEXAS

Lance Corporal David Espinoza, 20, was born and raised in Rio Bravo but attended high school in Laredo, CBS Dallas/Fort Worth reports.

Congressman HENRY CUELLAR released a statement that said, in part, "Mr. Espinoza embodied the values of America: grit, dedication, service, and valor. Mr. Espinoza is a hero."

The city of Laredo posted its condolences on Facebook.

MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL JARED M. SCHMITZ, 20, OF ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

For Lance Corporal Jared Schmitz, being a Marine "was something he always wanted to do," his father, Mark Schmitz, said in an interview, "and I never seen a young man train as hard as he did to be the best soldier he could be."

"He just went over in the last two weeks," his father, Mark Schmitz, told radio station KMOX in an interview Friday. Schmitz had been stationed in Jordan, and when the situation deteriorated in Afghanistan during the U.S. withdrawal, he was one of the thousands of U.S. troops deployed to Kabul.

Mark Schmitz's voice broke as he told KMOX, "I'm very honored that I could call him my son—his life meant so much more. I'm so incredibly devastated that I won't be able to see the man that he was very quickly growing into becoming."

MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL RYLEE J. MCCOLLUM, 20, OF JACKSON, WYOMING

Rylee McCollum was a native of Bondurant, Wyoming. He attended Jackson Hole High School and was a 2019 graduate of Summit Innovations School in Jackson, according to CBS Wyoming affiliate KGWN-TV.

He was a husband and expectant father, according to The Associated Press.

"He was a Marine before he knew he was allowed to be a Marine," McCollum's sister, Cheyenne McCollum, told AP.

An uncle of McCollum's wife, Gigi, tweeted a picture of both of them at the dinner table: "Thank you all for your prayers, outpouring love to Gigi, and recognizing our own American Hero."

MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL DYLAN R. MEROLA, 20,
OF RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CALIFORNIA

Lance Corporal Dylan R. Merola had only been in Afghanistan for a little over a week, his mother told CBS Los Angeles.

"He was supposed to come home in a couple of weeks," said a loved one.

The Los Osos High School graduate planned to go to college and study engineering. He was honored at his alma mater's first football game of the season.

"One of the best kids ever," his mother, Cheryl Merola, said. "Kind, loving . . . he would give anything for anybody."

MARINE CORPS LANCE CORPORAL KAREEM M. NIKOUI, 20,
OF NORCO, CALIFORNIA

Kareem M. Nikoui attended Norco High School in 2019 and served in JROTC, CBS Los Angeles reports.

"Just a good kid. Really had a strong energy about him and knew what he wanted to do," Norco High School principal Robert Ibbetson said. "It was neat to see that kind of direction and drive and goal-setting."

He is survived by his mother, father and siblings, the city of Norco confirmed Friday night.

RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF CASA OF COLLIN COUNTY

HON. VAN TAYLOR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 10, 2021

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Collin County's milestone 30th anniversary of service to the community and to the abused and neglected children of North Texas.

Since its establishment in 1991, CASA has served 100% of the abused and neglected children removed from their homes in Collin County. As the child's official voice in court, these guardian ad litem work tirelessly to champion the best interests of the children they serve so that they receive needed services while ensuring the child's case moves through the system as quickly as possible. The ultimate goal of CASA is for each child to be reunited with family if appropriate or to be placed in a safe, permanent, and loving home. It is a mission their trained advocates do not take lightly.

CASA's network of trained advocates are often recognized for providing consistent, strong, and clear voices for abused and neglected children as they navigate a complicated legal system. CASA often serves as the only stable, trusted adult in the lives of these children as they navigate the changing dynamics of the foster care system.

Since its inception, CASA has advocated for more than 12,000 children. Further, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the dedicated volunteer advocates, exceptional staff, outstanding leadership, and committed Board of Directors and Advisory Board once again rose to meet the needs of those they serve by adapting their processes to provide even greater support through new and innovative ways.

Now as we reflect upon the thirty years of selfless service performed by CASA of Collin County, I ask my colleagues to join me in

thanking the organization and their decades of fierce advocates for changing the lives of countless children in our community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM R. SANCHEZ

HON. JUDY CHU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 10, 2021

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of William R. Sanchez who passed away at the age of 103 on August 23, 2021. Mr. Sanchez was a longtime constituent of mine in Monterey Park, California, and an American patriot who bravely served our country during World War II.

Mr. Sanchez was born on July 18, 1918, in El Paso, Texas, and moved with his family to Los Angeles at the age of one. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in 1938 and immediately joined the Civilian Conservation Corps, where he worked in Northern California managing forests and building roads. He received a boxing scholarship to UCLA, but instead decided to enlist in the U.S. Army in 1940. In search of adventure, Mr. Sanchez chose to serve at Fort Mills on Corregidor Island in the Philippines. He was assigned to Army Intelligence on the island and served on General Douglas MacArthur's staff. While working with Army Intelligence, he helped provide advance notice of the Japanese force on its way to attack Pearl Harbor.

In 1942, Sgt. Sanchez fought in the Battle of Corregidor and was taken as a prisoner of war after keeping the Japanese at bay for five months. Like thousands of other American prisoners of war, he experienced unimaginable atrocities on the Bataan Death March. He was then transferred on a Japanese "hell ship" and taken to Camp Omori near Tokyo, where he was constantly abused, beaten, and underfed. Sgt. Sanchez's mental fortitude helped him endure these brutal conditions for over three years until the end of the war.

After the war, he returned to the U.S. and attended Woodbury College where he earned his bachelor's degree. He then went on to earn a master's degree in International Trade and Finance from USC. He started his own company, Belenco, and became one of the biggest importers and suppliers of rolled steel products on the West Coast. Mr. Sanchez settled with his family in Monterey Park in 1958 and took an active role in the community. Over the years, he remained active in the veteran community, serving as the keynote speaker at many veterans forums, and offering advice and support to countless veterans and their families on their benefits and rights.

William Sanchez was truly a hero of our time. He leaves behind an enduring legacy of service and sacrifice to our nation, and that is why it is my distinct honor to commemorate his life.

HONORING THE LIFE OF L.D. "JACK" GRIFFIN

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 10, 2021

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of L.D. "Jack" Griffin, who passed away on Saturday, July 24, 2021, at the age of 94.

On April 11, 1927, Jack was born in Monroe, Louisiana, to Sam and Alma Lee Mullican Griffin. He married Myra Collier, and they spent 68 years together. Jack and Myra were blessed with two children, Ky and Leeza.

Jack patriotically served our country in the United States Navy during World War II. He was a longtime resident of Tyler County and continued to faithfully serve his community as a member of the First Baptist Church of Woodville. Jack was also a part of the Magnolia Masonic Lodge No. 495 in Woodville. As a Mason, he attained the 32nd Degree, an honor bestowed for his outstanding service. He was also a member of the El Mina Shrine in Galveston, Texas.

Jack traveled the world as a pipeliner. His specialty was in water crossings. Jack skillfully engineered and constructed pipelines in Straits of Mackinac, the Puget Sound, the Straits of Gibraltar, and many places in between. Jack retired as Director of Field Services with Williams Companies based in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Jack is remembered as one who loved his family and looked forward to being amused and entertained at their regular gatherings. In the words of Henry David Thoreau, he went confidently in the direction of his dreams, living a life more than he imagined. Even though he worked all over the world, he said of his beloved Woodville, "It may not have been where I intended to go, but I think I ended up where I needed to be."

Jack is survived by his wife, Myra Griffin of Woodville; son, Ky D. Griffin and wife Rhonda of Jasper; daughter, Leeza Blanchette and husband Jacques of Woodville; grandchildren, Blake Blanchette and wife Helen of Sinton, Megan Parmer and husband Randy of The Woodlands, Brent Blanchette of Woodville, Blaire Rogers and husband Dwight of North Palm Beach, Florida and Collier Griffin of Chicago, Illinois; great-grandchildren, Caroline, Libby, and Ellie Blanchette, Emerson Parmer, and Sutton, Quint, and Griffin Rogers; sisters-in-law, Carolyn Collier of Goldsboro, North Carolina and Judy Sheffield of Houston; nieces, Kim Nagypal and husband Bela of Woodville, Tammy Bohannon of Allen, and Cristi Connor and husband Paul of Houston. Jack was preceded in death by his parents, Sam and Alma Griffin, and his brother-in-law Malcolm Collier.

Madam Speaker, I honor my friend Jack Griffin as one of the last members of the Greatest Generation. His faithful service to our country and his community will not be forgotten, and my heartfelt prayers remain with his family and friends during this difficult time.